

BODLEY (Rachel L.)

The College Story

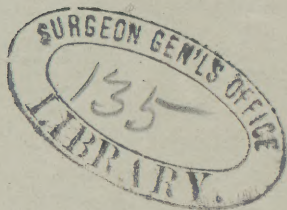
BY THE DEAN

RACHEL L. BODLEY, A. M., M. D.

Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania,

Commencement Day,

MARCH 17, 1881.



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VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

TO THE

TWENTY-NINTH GRADUATING CLASS

OF THE

Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania,

BY

RACHEL L. BODLEY, A. M., M. D.

Professor of Chemistry and Toxicology,

MARCH 17th, 1881.

(The statistics in this Address have been revised to date of publication, April 6th, 1881.)

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1881.

Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania,

North College Ave. and Twenty-first St., Philadelphia.

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RACHEL L. BODLEY, M. D., DEAN,

North College Avenue and 21st Street.

The Twenty-Ninth Annual Commencement was held in Association Hall, Philadelphia, on Thursday, March 17th, 1881, at 12 M., when the Degree of Doctor of Medicine was conferred by the President pro tem., Hon. W. S. Pierce, upon the following-named ladies:

ELLEN E. BROWN,	Mass.	ALMA A. LAPHAM,	New Bruns.
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E. V. P. B. CULBERTSON, A. B., . .	Ind.	ADDIE H. McDANIEL,	N. H.
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The Thirty-Second Annual Winter Session will open Thursday, October 6th, 1881.

VALEDICTORY.

LADIES, GRADUATES IN MEDICINE:

For the twenty-ninth time the College doors have swung open on commencement day, and you, a group of daughters, have passed out across the threshold of Alma Mater. We, of the Faculty, whose duty and pleasure it is to serve within the portals, have watched you sadly, as each receiving her well-earned degree has passed onward and outward, to return to us no more. We regard you with honest pride, for we esteem you thoroughly equipped for the work which lies before you, and we only detain you in this glad hour of your personal history, to offer our sincere congratulations ere we say farewell. Yesterday, you were our students, to-day, our peers; we recognize the changed relation, and heartily wish each one of you "God speed" on the journey of professional life now auspiciously begun.

Why these congratulations annually bestowed, should take the form of a lecture addressed to graduates at a time when they are overwearied with lectures cannot be satisfactorily shown, any more than the reason why the name "commencement" should be applied to the occasion which evokes the address. Be the reasons what they may, the literature of medical commencements is not without its peculiar merit and its economic uses, replete as it is with valuable suggestions, with sound counsel and with lofty inspiration which bear fruit in useful lives, years after the flowers offered on commencement day have faded.

As undergraduates, you have been privileged to hear on recent commencement occasions, forcible words of womanly wisdom touching our profession, its duties and responsibilities, concerning medical education, and all the varied and momentous interests which radiate from medical work as a centre. How can I as your valedictorian of 1881 supplement this valuable teaching on the part of my colleagues? The reply to this question was a subject of anxious thought throughout the early winter. The answer came to me at last: I will show these young graduates the work accomplished by Alma Mater in the person of her daughters throughout the thirty years gone; this shall be my parting lesson for them! In the chemical laboratory we are accustomed to demonstrate each truth as taught, by recourse to test-tube,

reagent and balance ; the same method applied to the subject of the medical education of women, would demand the crucial test of actual living applied to those who voluntarily have become exponents of a grand social and educational reform.

No time was to be lost, for it was past mid-winter when my resolution was taken, and I at once prepared, and on the 16th of February mailed, printed questions to all the Alumnæ of the College. There are 276 of these, less 32 who have laid their burdens down by the way side, and have entered upon their reward.

These questions were eight in number, and were designed to cover the whole ground of a life work, as to its professional character, its pecuniary rewards, social status, teaching work, membership in medical societies, and last but by no means least, the influence of the study and practice of medicine upon woman's holiest relations, as wife and mother.

Why should I deny that my heart failed me before the mail bags had received their entire burden. Would these earnest women permit the searching scrutiny of Alma Mater? Might they not resent the inquiry as unwarranted, and give no sign in return? I waited; on Thursday night the mailing was completed, and on Saturday following the papers began to flit back; steadily by night and by day they came, until on March 1st, 134 had been received. Nor did the answers then cease; on March 2d, Utah responded, and on March 4th, California; but not until March 10th was snow-bound Manitoba heard from. India and China and European lands could not respond in season, although thither also the inquiries were sent. These answers so prompt in their coming and so complete in their details, have in a manner which is quite remarkable gathered these College Alumnæ about me, and during the hours I have devoted to the preparation of this address, I have been among them and have caught their spirit. I propose, therefore, to present to you and to our assembled friends composing the large audience gathered in honor of your graduation, this college story; I shall tell it simply, as it has been told to me, in figures and in statistics, which admit neither of coloring nor exaggeration.

Prof. Carrington Bolton, at the annual commencement of our sister institution, the Woman's Medical College of the New York Infirmary, last spring, selected as the theme of his address, "The Early Practice of Medicine by Women," or during the period dating from the earliest antiquity to the middle of the nineteenth century, or about the time of the graduation of the first American woman in medicine. If this outlook be limited by the graduation of the first American woman, then by the first woman of modern times, for in this reform, America leads the world!

This record presented by Prof. Bolton, in so masterly a manner as to interest English friends of our cause to the extent of a recent reprint in pamphlet form in London, is by no means inspiring. Exceptional women loom up here and there throughout the centuries and by their profound knowledge and their professional skill, prove the capability of women to grapple with abstruse subjects, and to put in practice the knowledge thus obtained, but this is all. No progress is apparent. Educational opportunities are not for the masses, women are undisciplined as to preparatory education, and the blossom of professional training and professional achievement, is rare and uncertain, as the blossoming of the aloe tree.

Very different in character is the larger company of whom I discourse to-day, the graduates of a single medical college, and that our own, graduated during a third of a century. Different, because they have come up to us through the gate-way of our best colleges and seminaries for women, and thus prepared to receive a professional education, they have profited thereby.

There sit upon the platform with us, three members* of the original Board of Corporators in 1850, steadfast friends, whose value to our cause we thoroughly appreciate. One of these gentlemen has attended every commencement since the first, and has beheld each class of graduates as they presented themselves for the Degree. He is privileged in having beheld them all; we are privileged with him to-day in calling them back, bringing each her record with her.

The whole number of graduates, as has been already stated, is 276. Of these, 32 have died. Of the remaining 244, 189 have responded since February 16th, 1881.†

Of this number 166 responded affirmatively to the question: "Are you now engaged in active medical practice?" 23 respond in the negative.

The reasons for the negative response are as follows: Domestic Duties, 8; Philanthropic Work, 1; Ill Health, 6; Retired, 3; No reason assigned, 5.

The second question pertains to the predominating character of the medical practice of the 166 who are thus actively engaged, whether gynæcological, obstetrical, surgical or medical. The responses are as follows:

Gynæcological practice predominating, 32; obstetrical, 10; medical, 10; surgical, 3; general practice, without discrimination,

* Hon. Wm. S. Peirce, Wm. J. Mullen, John Longstreth.

† Of the 55 non-resident alumnae whose question-papers have not been returned to date, 25 have either reported in person or by letter to the Dean during year ending January, 1881, and she thus knows them to be engaged in active practice. Three (3) others are known to be abroad, pursuing their professional studies. There remain, therefore, only 27 whose present employment is unknown.

37; gynæcological and obstetrical, 23; gynæcological and surgical, 6; gynæcological and medical, 29; obstetrical and medical, 9; surgical and medical, 7. Total, 166.

The third question relates to the social status of the woman physician in the community in which she dwells.

One hundred and fifty-seven answer this question, and of these 150 report cordial social recognition. These answers are often emphasized and frequently accompanied by testimonials in proof thereof. Seven report negatively. These seven dwell in communities which may not be named here, since the announcement would be accompanied by possible annoyance to the ladies interested. These exceptions recall the character of public opinion twenty-five years ago in many communities which are now happily advanced and reformed to the extent of permitting every woman to cultivate her talents and to engage heartily in every good work her hands may find to do.

The fourth question interrogates in reference to the work accomplished by the woman practitioner as resident or visiting physician in hospital, asylum, charitable institution, or as physician in college or school for girls. To this question 159 make reply: 60 are thus engaged. The record in this regard is inspiring. In our own State of Pennsylvania one is physician in charge of Woman's Hospital of Philadelphia; one is resident physician to department for women in State Hospital for the Insane of the Southeastern District of Pennsylvania; one is assistant physician State Hospital for the Insane, Southeastern District of Pennsylvania; one is assistant physician Pennsylvania State Lunatic Hospital at Harrisburg.

In New York, one is resident physician in Nursery and Child's Hospital, Staten Island; one is assistant resident physician, same institution; one is resident physician House of Mercy for Girls, New York City. Eight are assistant physicians in the Woman's Hospital of Philadelphia, and in the New England Hospital for Women and Children, in Boston; besides these, several are consulting and visiting physicians to hospitals and charitable institutions, members of consulting boards; one alumna occupies the responsible position of physician to the State Industrial School, Lancaster, Mass.; others have in the past occupied similar positions, as the position of resident in our own Woman's Hospital, resident in the N. E. Hospital for Women and Children, Boston, in the late Mission Hospital of Philadelphia, etc., etc. Besides this service in hospitals, several record themselves as resident or visiting physicians to schools for girls; one as auxiliary visitor to the State Board of Charities in Massachusetts, etc., etc. One states that she was City Physician for one year to the city of Springfield, Mass. Another is now Health Officer to the city of Charlotte, Michigan. The frequent

mention in the answers to this fourth question of being physician (usually without salary) to "Erring Woman's Refuge," "Home for Unfortunate Women," "Orphans' Home," "Home for Girls," "Reformatory School for Girls," "Infirmary for Infants," "Children's Home," "Home for Aged and Infirm Persons," etc., etc., suggests the wide and fruitful field opened by medical work to true-hearted women, skillful and wise physicians, wherein they may accomplish great and lasting good for their race.

The fifth question relates to the monetary value of the medical practice per year, and is answered by 76 ladies.

24 as much as \$1000, and less than \$2000.

20 as much as \$2000, and less than \$3000.

10 as much as \$3000, and less than \$4000.

5 as much as \$4000, and less than \$5000.

3 as much as \$5000, and less than \$15,000.

Four report sums varying from \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year.
Ten report less than \$1000 per year.

The average income is found to be \$2907.30 to each of 76.

The four who report the exceptional large sums, are established practitioners, and have reported the amount each year for several years.

These sums may probably be relied upon by the social statistician as fair averages of the income of women physicians, since many are careful to state that they give only actual receipts, as indicated by bank-book or ledger, and several decline to attempt to reply, stating as the reason that they are too busy to make an accurate estimate, and they are unwilling to hazard a guess. Several, who make no estimate, reply that they are able to support comfortably families varying in size (frequently stating the number in family), father, mother and brothers; mother and sisters; several nephews and nieces, etc., etc. Three alumnae report having accumulated sums sufficient to permit them to retire from active service.

Question sixth referred to the work for which woman is pre-eminently fitted, that of medical teacher, and specified separately institutions of learning, and popular audiences of women. Fifty-five answer this question affirmatively. Among these are seven professors in medical colleges in Philadelphia and New York, and twice that number of lecturers and instructors in our own College and in the Woman's Medical College of Chicago. The statements which have come in; relative to the popular courses of lectures on medical subjects for women are highly gratifying. Sometimes the audiences have been large ones in cities; sometimes they have been "talks in my office, with my patients;" sometimes "instruction of my office students," and often, "lectures on physiology and hygiene" in girls' schools, and oftener still, as private letters, which have accompanied answers, have stated, the teaching has been of the character set forth in the

letter of an alumna who is practicing far out on the Western prairies: "I am daily thankful for the privilege of teaching women (in their homes) how to take care of themselves and how to preserve the health of their children."

The seventh question is the inquiry which, in later years, has assumed with us especial interest in deciding the professional status of women physicians, viz., that of membership in medical societies. Sixty-eight reply affirmatively to this question: "Are you a member of a county, State, or other local medical society?" Of these 4 reside in California, 1 in Connecticut, 1 in Delaware, 4 in Illinois, 1 in Indiana, 3 in Kansas, 2 in Massachusetts, 5 in Michigan, 2 in Minnesota, 1 in Missouri, 1 in New Hampshire, 15 in New York, 7 in Ohio, 15 in Pennsylvania, 3 in Rhode Island, 1 in Tennessee, 2 in Wisconsin—seventeen States in all.

The professional ability of many of these ladies has been recognized by election to membership in more than one State or local medical organization. Thus, the accomplished author of the Boylston prize essay for the year 1876, reports membership in six societies, five in New York city and in the American Medical Association. Another alumna, practicing in the largest city in Ohio, reports membership in four societies, three prominent local organizations, and the American Medical Association. Again, especial distinction has been conferred upon others by their enjoyment of sole membership as women practitioners of medicine, as in the Boston Gynecological Society, where membership has been accorded to but two women, and both of these are alumnae of our college. Seventy-six different medical societies in all, throughout the United States, have thus honored women. Five of our graduates have represented their respective State societies in the American Medical Association, viz.: Delegates from Rhode Island, Ohio, Illinois, New York and Tennessee. But eight women have as yet enjoyed this honor of representation in the American Medical Association; the preponderance is therefore in favor of our college—five out of eight. An alumna, practicing for some years in Minnesota, writes that she holds the appointment of delegate to the American Medical Association for 1881. Montgomery County and Delaware County (Pa.) Medical Societies have each elected a college alumna as a delegate to the Pennsylvania Medical Society, which will meet in Lancaster in May, 1881.

One alumna writes from Iowa that on the 3d of February, 1881, she was invited by the Dean of the Medical Department of Iowa State University to accept the position of Member of the Medical Examining Committee of the Medical Department of the Iowa State University.

While Pennsylvanians may be gratified to note the number (15) admitted to membership throughout the State, the member-

ship in regular Medical Societies in the County of Philadelphia is far from satisfactory. The papers have come in from all our Philadelphia Alumnæ (30 in number) with the brief answer, "No."

To the last question, (the eighth), 61 make answer. The inquiry is worded thus: "What influence has the study and practice of medicine had upon your domestic relations as wife and mother?" As it is concerning the phase of influence suggested by this question that our critics make their severest comments, so it is the most difficult to present truthfully the impressions made by the answers received. I have decided to let the statistics speak for themselves.

The answers of the fifty-two married ladies who respond to this question tabulate as follows: Influence, favorable, 45; not entirely favorable, 6; unfavorable, 1.

Eleven unmarried ladies reply to this question after striking out from the line, the words "wife and mother." Of these, three state that the study and practice of medicine have prevented marriage, while a fourth states definitely that she has "remained single for reasons entirely distinct from her profession." The following answers from unmarried women are given as fair specimens of the remainder:

"Never married, but have found time and means to care for several orphan nephews and nieces."

Another: "I hope I am more patient and persevering, withal a better woman than I ever could have been without the discipline which the study and practice of medicine has afforded me."

Returning to the answers of married women, because these possess the greater general interest, I remark that the song of domestic life as I have listened with ear attent, has been sung in no minor key. In the melody (as the tabulated statement shows) are a few discordant notes, but these are such as a master might throw in to enhance the harmonies of his strain. For example, a thoroughly conscientious mother writes from her nursery, where three quite young children claim the mother's ministry, "The *study* of medicine is of great benefit, but the practice often interferes with my duty to my family." The clear, pure quality of the replies, as a whole, is truly exhilarating, for example: "Purifying and ennobling. Married a physician since I began practice. Am the mother of a boy of eight years of age." Another: "I keep house, and care for husband and three children as I would if not in practice; perhaps not quite as well, however."

Another: "I have not been less a wife or mother. My duties as such have never been neglected. At times I may have been more taxed than if I had not these duties to attend to." Another wife and mother, whose successful training of three children now in adult life entitles her to an opinion: "I think if the history of the families of women-physicians were written it would be found

that their children are well cared for, well trained, well educated ; all this, and household duties not neglected. * * * Women who study medicine are watchful and careful." Another: "As wife my duties have never been interfered with ; as a mother I have been incalculably benefited. * * * My husband is also a physician. I am often enabled to assist him with his cases, both in diagnosis and treatment, and I often find his advice of great value to me. We are, mutually, a help to each other."

In reviewing these statistics, which are probably the first ever collected in regard to medical women, we may discover that they possess unusual interest in several particulars. *First*—The small number of deaths which have occurred in this body of hard-working women claims our attention ; in thirty years there have been only thirty-two deaths (out of 276). One of the early objections to the practice of medicine by women was the prejudicial influence such exhausting work might have upon the life of the general practitioner. Facts have not confirmed this fear ; on the contrary, the study and practice of medicine has, in the judgment of more than one woman-physician, saved her own life. It has not been an unusual experience that women "who have been engaged in the practice of medicine a dozen years have been found to possess more vigor and power of endurance at the expiration of that time than they possessed in the beginning of their professional career." A member of the second graduating class (1853), and therefore in an especial sense one of the pioneers among women physicians, kindly sent a long and delightful letter with her replies to questions, and as her testimony is valuable, by permission, I make an extract from her letter :

"Thirty years ago, people used to say, 'If the women physicians succeed, only large cities will be benefited, because no woman can ever endure the hardships of a country practice.' This determined me to take a practice in the country, for, I thought, Alma Mater would be glad to have this obstacle removed. I bought a horse and saddle, also one hundred dollars' worth of medicine, and settled in a small village in Pennsylvania, with the Susquehanna river on one side, and mountains on the other. I often rode ten miles in the night as well as in the day. I made friends, and my practice increased rapidly. The second year I bought a carriage, with side lamps, which was much more comfortable than riding on horseback. * * * Every one had a friendly greeting for me. The poor and rich alike opened their doors to me. If I had a hard day's ride, I was sure to have invitations to stop to dinner and have my horse fed, and often my horse would be left in the stable and a fresh one brought out for my use the rest of the day. Of course, these many acts of kindness could not banish the care and anxiety, and above all,

the great responsibility with which I ever felt burdened; but they did seem to give to the snow some warmth, they seemed to make the swollen creeks less violent, the mountain precipices less dangerous. * * * I practiced in the village three years and averaged three dollars per day. Then I married and removed about two miles on the other side of the river on my husband's farm. Here it was much easier; my husband never allowed me to harness my horse, and if I had a call in the night he always drove for me. Eighteen months after my marriage my only child, a daughter, was born. * * * After practicing thirteen years my family thought they needed me at home and that I needed rest. I, therefore, gave up practice. I now go out occasionally, but my visits are gratuitous."

This was an experience of twenty years ago. To prove that younger women are still able to endure, I quote from a letter, received with the replies, from an alumna (class of 1875), a young wife and mother, practicing in Nebraska; she says: "During three weeks since the holidays I did not have a night's unbroken rest. We have had an unusually cold winter, with deep snows, and I have had hard work to attend to my country practice. I have been compelled to carry a shovel in my sleigh and shovel myself out when the snow gets too deep."

The *second* particular which attracts our attention is the small number of women who have failed to devote themselves to the practice of medicine after graduating. Having obtained her degree and, in later years, her hospital training also, each has addressed herself to the practice of medicine as a lifework; marriage has not interfered with this work as, theoretically, it might be supposed to do. Of the whole number of graduates, fifty-four have married since graduation, seventy-five having been married women when they studied medicine. Of the fifty-four who have married since graduation, only five have desisted from practice on account of marriage; many have achieved brilliant success since assuming the duties and responsibilities of married life; this statement would be still more emphatic if I were at liberty to mention names; but this I cannot do, as one of the conditions on which returns were afforded was, that "all replies would be held sacred as to names." In this relation is to be remarked the fact that young women already pecuniarily independent have not avoided the "practice" after graduation from motives arising from self-indulgence or from love of ease. The record of the few upon our list who have been thus favored of fortune ranks among our best.

A *third* feature which these statistics emphasize is the cheerful contentment which claims the interested attention of one who turns the leaves of the folios of question papers, reading (as she cannot avoid doing) *between the lines*. The impression made is

that of a congenial work which whether pecuniary returns or social recognition is considered is wholly satisfactory. The physician who sends her record is not debating in her own mind whether she shall next turn her attention to the study of music or of literature, or it may be of telegraphy. She has found her calling in life; it is soul-satisfying; she is attending faithfully to its demands with no thought of change. That this is great gain for man or woman none will deny; but that it is a dominant characteristic of the professional life of woman physicians as shown by actual statistics is a matter of sincere congratulation. The true animus of each life is fitly expressed in those ever-memorable words of Prof. Preston, written in 1867: "For us it is the post of restful duty, the place assigned to us by the order of Providence, and we cannot do other than maintain it."

This college "story" would be incomplete were grateful acknowledgment to the alumnae of the college for valuable services rendered the cause of medical education of women omitted. The first of these in order of time, as well as of importance, relates to hospital advantages for women students. It is doubtless known to this intelligent Philadelphia audience that there stands on a plat of ground in the immediate vicinity of our own well appointed college building, buildings owned and occupied by the Woman's Hospital of Philadelphia. For the first time in the world's history there is here a Woman's Hospital, managed solely by women in its financial, as well as in its administrative departments. Its record is without a blemish, and the progress of the good work is upward and unfaltering. When the history of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania shall be written, the future historian will dwell with great satisfaction upon the heroic support which women here afforded women in the hour of extreme discouragement. When, after ten years of earnest effort in the pursuit of medical knowledge, it became evident that the doors of the renowned clinics of Philadelphia were persistently closed to women students, a serious doubt as to the possibility of properly educating women for the manifold duties of medical practice arose. Without bedside teaching didactic lectures failed of their high purpose. It was at this juncture that the courageous Dr. Ann Preston, member of the first graduating class of the College, so weak as to her fragile form, so strong in the might of a holy purpose, resolved that clinical teaching should be had. Faithfully throughout one year she threaded the streets of Philadelphia and the roads of suburban districts. It was while thus engaged that she made this record in her diary: "I went to every one who I thought would give me either money or influence." As a result, funds were pledged, influential women interested, and, in 1860, a charter was obtained which sets forth as the object of the corporation a three-fold

purpose, viz.: "To establish a hospital for the treatment of the diseases of women and children, for the practical training of nurses, and for furnishing facilities for clinical instruction to women engaged in the study of medicine." Important as are the first two objects, the last will, in the history of the allied institutions, stand pre-eminent, for its accomplishment saved the cause of medical education for women in Philadelphia when it had well-nigh failed, not from lack of students, or of able professors, or of money, or of friends, but through lack of clinical instruction.

The Scripture, "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given," has since been fulfilled in the progressive unfolding of hospital teaching afforded our students in other hospitals of Philadelphia, and "the end is not yet."

Another alumna contributed to securing clinical advantages also, but in quite another way. She was a member of the third graduating class (1854). She had entered upon the study of medicine for the express purpose of going to Asia as a medical missionary. She is described in well authenticated documents in my possession as a young woman of rare gifts and graces, combining "womanly dignity of character with refinement of manners." Having received her degree as stated, she realized her unpreparedness to enter upon the practice of medicine in foreign lands without hospital training, and, in company with other members of the class, sought access to the wards of the different hospitals of the city. Every effort in this direction having failed, she applied, supported by the powerful influence of Mrs. S. J. Hale, for the situation of a head nurse in the Philadelphia Hospital. This she obtained, the immediate care of the woman's wards being assigned her, with access to cases of interest in any part of the institution. In this laborious position she faithfully wrought three years; at the expiration of this time, realizing that her purpose was accomplished to the extent possible in her limited sphere, she applied to the missionary board of the church of which she was a member, to be sent out as a missionary physician. This they positively declined to do, stating as a reason for denying the request that the Board would not send out single women. Foiled in the accomplishment of this cherished purpose of her life, and seeing no other way to compass her desire to carry healing mercies to the daughters of Asia, she remained in her position at Blockley, serving as before.

When, several years later, Matthew Vassar was making up his corps of noble women for the faculty of Vassar College, the claims of this cultured lady were presented by influential friends. As a result, President Raymond invited her to occupy the chair of Physiology and Hygiene, and the post of Resident Physician in the institution when it should be opened, and she accepted. She resigned her position, and looked forward to release

from arduous duties. Before the expiration of the term of her engagement, she was smitten with fever, at the time epidemic in the wards, and died an employé in Blockley Hospital, January 28th, 1865; and yet four years after her death, for the first time in the annals of Philadelphia, a distinguished clinical lecturer* began his lecture in the amphitheatre of the same hospital in which this woman physician had wrought unrecognized seven years, with words of welcome to "*Ladies and Gentlemen*," the Class of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania having been admitted to attendance as students of medicine.

But the valuable ministry of Dr. Elizabeth G. Shattuck did not end here. Her rejection by a Missionary Board in 1858, because she was an unmarried woman, together with other cases of a similar character, led Mrs. T. C. Doremus, of New York, Mrs. S. J. Hale of Philadelphia, and other ladies of kindred spirit in those two cities and in Boston, to form a society in 1860, whose express object was stated to be to send out single ladies as teachers or Bible-readers to the women of heathen lands. This society, which flourishes still after the death of its founders, is known as the Woman's Union Missionary Society. It may be regarded as the mother of six or more other missionary societies composed of women, and formed for the purpose of sending women to teach and to minister to the spiritual and physical needs of women in Eastern lands. Although the first society was organized in 1860, the development of the work of these Associations did not justify the employment of missionary physicians until 1870, when a graduate of this College (class of 1869) was sent out by the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church. Her destination was Barcilly, India. This lady, Dr. Clara Swain, may be regarded as the first, of a rapidly lengthening line of women missionary physicians, who, working in harmony with their associates in the zenanas of the East and the crowded abodes of China and Japan, are accomplishing a silent revolution in the condition of women, of which the world at large, little dreams.

In all, eight of our graduates have engaged in this work in Asia. Two of these, Dr. Mary Seelye and Dr. Lucilla Green-Cheney, are numbered among our alumnal dead. Dr. Mary F. Seelye graduated in 1870, and after one year spent in the Woman's Hospital in Boston, sailed for India, Wednesday, September 6th, 1871. Her destination was Calcutta, where she at once entered upon her work in connection with the Woman's Union Missionary Society. She died June 9th, 1875, aged 28 years. During the four years of her practice in Calcutta she attained a professional success which was quite remarkable. Her profession and her sex proved at once a passport to the most secluded apartments of Hindoo dwellings. The gentlemen of the medical profession, native as

* Alfred Stillé, M. D., I.L. D., January 2d, 1869.

well as English, were among the first to speak her praise. They freely consulted with her and esteemed her advice of the first importance.

Before the close of her first year she established a child's hospital, the earliest of its kind in India, which called forth from the Calcutta papers many words of approval and encouragement. There was scarcely a medical man in the city who did not give it his countenance and support. Early in the fifth month of its existence the government granted to the little hospital 150 rupees per month for the ensuing year. It accommodated thirty children. During the last year of Dr. Seelye's life, there were 145 sick children in its wards. Thirteen hundred and ninety-five patients were treated in the dispensary held in the hospital building, and the number of patients visited in their homes was 860. In the midst of this abounding professional work Dr. Seelye was stricken down. She sought rest and relief from the intense heat of the city, in the mountains of Northern India. After sixteen days' illness the telegraph wires flashed back to her associates in Calcutta "Dr. Seelye has gone home." She was buried the morning after her death just as the sun was rising upon the Himalaya slopes, the pure white peaks of the snowy range looking down upon the lonely grave.

Time fails me in which to dwell upon other eloquent lives and upon other phases of this foreign work, which is destined in the order of Providence to constitute an important department of the ministry of women physicians in the future. The triumphs already wrought in those far-off lands through the agency of our own alumnae seem in the telling, fairy tales of wonder. The royal gift to Dr. Clara Swain by an Indian prince of a property worth 30,000 rupees for the establishment of her Woman's Hospital and Dispensary, in Bareilly,* is only one of several interesting and startling experiences.

Looking out over the seas, we are constrained to exclaim, "What hath God wrought" by women for women; and looking within our College with its group of consecrated missionary students, we repeat the refrain: "Who knoweth whether we are (thou art) come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

What young woman in this large and attentive audience has not found herself on a higher plane of being, as she has listened

* In December, 1871, His Highness Nawab Mahomed Kulb Ali Khan Bahadur, of Rampore, a Mohammedan, and utterly opposed to Christianity, presented an estate adjoining the Mission premises as a site for a Woman's Hospital. He had not previously been solicited, but having given audience to Dr. Swain and her friends in his palace at Rampore, after a brief presentation of the medical work on their part, His Highness promptly appreciated the humane character of the enterprise, and at once presented his Bareilly estate as a free gift. He is reported as having said on that occasion: "Take it, take it, I give it to you with much pleasure for that purpose."

to this recital of woman's service for humanity and the Divine Master? Who of them all cannot truthfully say with one of old, "Whereas I was blind, now I see?" They are not perhaps persuaded to become physicians, but they are persuaded that womanhood of the noblest type can rise to the full possession of all its powers, and yet lose nothing in sweet grace or womanly dignity, lose nothing in love of husband or of children, or of friends, friends worthy of the name of friend.

If it be true as our statistics have shown, that an earnest purpose in life transforms invalids into healthy women, if it extracts the sting from morbid grief, if it renders that unholy thing, a marriage of convenience, inexcusable, and leaves every woman free to enter the estate of matrimony from the purest motives only, then how desirable is the possession of such a purpose!

Who shall say that they who have toiled in this good work, whose fruition in part, our eyes have beheld to-day, toiled in vain! "They who have toiled;" our souls rise up to call them blessed, ere we descend from this mount of privilege to go as we each shall, our several ways, and engage in our several rounds of duty, of pleasure, or of suffering! To enumerate those who have given to the work of our College and Hospital the fealty of their best days and noblest service, would be to pronounce names sacred in many a household represented about me. Sweet-faced Lucretia Mott, who gave us at all times the wealth of her influence, and who sat with us on the platform during successive years, when friends were few and commencement audiences small and critical; Dr. Ann Preston and Dr. Emeline Cleveland, lovely in their lives, and in their death not divided, since now they sleep side by side, not far from Lucretia's grave; in hospital service, Anne Morrison, Maria W. Horton, Amanda M. Stoeve, Anna Justice Steel, Elizabeth W. Lippincott, and last as last translated, the genial, faithful Sarah B. F. Greble.

The living workers are yet with us, and need not our meed of praise; the inherent vitality of our cause is in no manner more thoroughly demonstrated than in the fact that as workers fall on sleep, new toilers arise, the ranks close solidly up, and the work with accelerated strength moves forward.

To this work for God and humanity, my young friends of the graduating class, I now dismiss you. My lips tremble with the earnestness they would fain express in this last farewell.

Let me find my benison in the proverb of the wise man paraphrased: Many daughters of Alma Mater have done virtuously: May the Class of 1881 excel them all!

Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania

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Organized March, 1875.

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